



## Figures on Ladder Background

### Catalogue Number

TEX 2

### Artwork Type

Textile Summary

### Date

c.1944

### Medium

serigraphy

### Paper Support

cotton, parachute nylon, silk, rayon

### More Information

Between 1944 and 1947 Ascher invited several leading artists to design silk 'squares', or scarves; the only limitation was to keep to a maximum size of 36 x 36 inches. As well as Moore, Henri Matisse, André Derain, Graham Sutherland, Ivon Hitchens, Howard Hodgkins, Marie Laurencin and Jean Cocteau participated in the scheme. The initial results were launched in Britain Can Make It, the first post-war design exhibition held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1946. The scarves were made using serigraphy, a form of screen printing. During the 1930s the term serigraph was coined to distinguish artists' screen prints from those used in commercial reproduction and sign-making. The fabrics were hand printed using stencils fixed to a fine silk screen. Dyes were then forced through the exposed areas of the screen on to the fabric. Produced not only in silk but also in parachute nylon, cotton and rayon, the scarves were intended to liven up the post-war wardrobe with bold colours and designs. They proved extremely popular, with Lida Ascher presenting Moore's Three Standing Figures c.1944 (TEX 1) on BBC television in 1947. Yet the reality was that when the squares were purchased, there was a tendency to frame them up as works of art in their own right. This idea was further reinforced when the Lefevre Gallery held an exhibition of the squares the same year. Following the success of the Lefevre exhibition, Ascher scarves toured the world to venues as far afield as Zurich, Montevideo, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Sydney. Roughly 60 per cent of the scarves were reserved for the foreign market. Due to post-war restrictions in Britain, those available at home were usually made in rayon.